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11 January 1974

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : The UN Emergency Force in the Middle East

Nearly two months after the Security Council authorized a peacekeeping operation to supervise the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) stands at approximately 4,000 men. Severe financing, deployment, and political problems have so slowed its progress that it seems likely at least another month will pass before the force reaches its prescribed 7,000-troop strength.

Although UNEF's troops are now stretched the full length of the Egyptian-Israeli lines on both sides of the Suez Canal, they are too understaffed and undersupplied to supervise the ceasefire. Even at full strength UNEF would not be able to forestall a renewal of major hostilities if either party should decide to return to the battlefield. The peacekeeping operations do not serve as a military deterrent to war. They can, however, serve as a political deterrent; they discourage the escalation of incidents; and they would encourage a prompt international response to a resumption or threatened resumption of war.

If UNEF is permitted to develop to its maximum effectiveness, it should be able to perform the following functions:

--increase the risks to both parties of major ground advances. Although it is doubtful that the UN troops would strongly resist being overrun by either the

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Egyptian or Israeli forces, the political costs of such an attack on neutral, international peacekeeping forces would be much higher than a direct attack on a combatant.

--report the origin and extent of violations. Prompt, neutral reporting would provide a basis for international response to any major ceasefire violations, and the expectation of such reporting would be a constraining factor. The military reports of UNEF and of the UN Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) have in the past been quite good.

--contain local incidents and delay their escalation. Like its reporting function, UNEF's capacity to contain a small incident will be important primarily as an aid to more effective international response. Given the close proximity of Egyptian and Israeli lines, the potential for localized incidents is high.

Political Impediments to UNEF's Development

UNEF faces serious political and technical obstacles which could prevent it from fulfilling any or all of these three functions. The political strains of building and maintaining UNEF are particularly severe, since, like all UN peacekeeping operations, it lacks a formalized structure to insulate it from the whims of member states or the fortunes of the peace settlement. The Security Council consensus in favor of the ceasefire and UNEF is, of course, very fragile and fully dependent on members' satisfaction with the substance and procedures of the peace settlement. A confrontation among Council members over the peace settlement or the UN's role in the Middle East would immediately threaten this consensus. Politicization of UNEF, actual or perceived, would also threaten its mandate and its capacity to fulfill any of its potential functions as a peacekeeping operation. Several of the participant states have strong sympathies for the Arabs and have shown little disposition to preserve UNEF's image of disinterestedness.

Although such problems might spontaneously develop into a crisis at any time, there are several situations that are most likely to provide the occasion: a dispute over renewal of the UNEF mandate, a challenge to the agreement worked out on the division of authority between the Security Council and Secretariat, and an attempted ejection of UNEF by either Egypt or Israel. Any of these are possible because of the

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ad hoc nature of UN peacekeeping operations; a more explicit statute for such operations--if one were to be worked out in the near future--could greatly reduce the hazards.

Renewal of the UNEF mandate. UNEF, like most peacekeeping operations, has been authorized and financed for only six months. In March 1974 the UN members will have to decide if it should continue. Dissatisfaction with UNEF, with the general UN role--or lack of role--in the Middle East, or with the behavior of any of the parties is likely to surface at that time. The General Assembly's approval of a special assessment to finance UNEF only narrowly escaped entanglement in the effort to fix blame for the war--the Arab states and the Soviet Union charging that Israel, the "aggressor," should pay a higher portion of the costs while the "victims" of the war should be exempted. Unless peace negotiations go exceptionally well, renewal of UNEF's mandate could easily become an occasion for renewing this debate.

A challenge to the Secretariat - Security Council division of authority. A stalemate between US emphasis on administration by the Secretary-General and Communist emphasis on control by the Security Council has long blocked efforts to establish some permanent organization and procedures for peacekeeping. There is now an ambiguous sharing of authority which relies on the success of informal consultations between Waldheim and Council members. Any political crisis over UNEF--particularly an East-West confrontation--could focus on this division of authority and deadlock the administration of the peacekeeping operation.

Ejection by the host state. UN peacekeeping forces are subject to the sovereignty of the states on whose territory they serve; consent must be given before UN forces enter the country. There is no clear understanding concerning the duration or manner of terminating this mandate. In 1967, Egypt abruptly requested that UNEF troops be removed--and subsequently advanced its troops to the Israeli frontier so that UNEF troops were prevented from continuing their duties. In the present crisis, Tel Aviv has refused to permit UNEF contingents from states that have broken relations with it to serve in Israeli-held territory--thus underscoring its assertion of territorial authority over the force. Ejection is an extreme but constantly available option which either of the parties could use to terminate the peacekeeping operation. The mere threat of ejection, meanwhile, can be used to express either party's dissatisfaction with the course of the peace settlement.

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Unlike UNEF's political problems, its technical difficulties do not so much threaten the force's continued existence as they reduce its capacity to supervise the ceasefire. The understaffed contingents now in the Middle East lack not only arms, but sufficient vehicles to make full patrols. They also lack adequate medical, communications, and administrative resources. Continuing airlift delays and financial shortages offer little hope that these inadequacies will soon be overcome.

Although such difficulties are characteristic of UN peacekeeping operations, they seem to have been exacerbated in UNEF by the predominance of inadequately prepared contributing states which also lack independent resources. In the protracted Security Council negotiations over which countries should contribute to UNEF, political criteria far outweighed any consideration of ability to field effective contingents. Many of the European states which have troops and equipment earmarked for UN operations were excluded by an understanding that NATO and Warsaw Pact members would not participate except in logistics support. Although some units are quite able, particularly the advance troops drawn from the Cyprus peacekeeping operation, the Secretariat has doubts concerning the capability of some units. Poland especially seems quite unprepared for its logistics responsibilities. Several of the developing states are unable to provide equipment and, in some cases, even salaries for their units pending UN reimbursements. Reimbursements for such operations are notoriously slow; some participants in the Congo operation have yet to be repaid. Although the General Assembly has approved a special assessment to raise funds for UNEF, the UN has little cash reserves to meet operating expenses.

Delayed and disorganized airlifts have also impeded UNEF. Although the Soviet Union promptly offered to provide free transport for UNEF contingents--a departure from Moscow's traditional refusal to participate in peacekeeping operations--its airlifts have been so disorganized that some observers suspect intentional delay of UNEF deployment in order to express resentment of US predominance in the peace negotiations. The US has now assumed responsibility for more airlifts, but UNEF still lacks adequate transport facilities.

Some of UNEF's technical problems will be resolved once the full force is assembled in the Middle East. UNEF's composition and the problems of financing suggest, however,

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that the force will face chronic technical difficulties and supply shortages. Since the force depends on members' contributions, further supply problems can be expected if there is dissatisfaction with the operation or with the peace negotiations.

Although severely circumscribed by its ad hoc nature, UNEF is serving a function which no other force can provide; no national army would be accepted by the combatants to supervise the ceasefire, make unbiased reports of violations, and stand between the opposing armies. UNEF's role may be equally vital in keeping the peace that is finally negotiated. An enlarged role would be dependent, however, on a successful effort to overcome the serious weaknesses that now prevent UNEF and other such peacekeeping operations from reaching their full effectiveness.

It is unlikely that any radical new advance--such as the creation of a semi-autonomous UN peacekeeping agency with its own standing force can be achieved. UN peacekeeping operations have remained impromptu projects for twenty-eight years because the member states are unwilling to grant them organizational independence. Despite the need demonstrated by UNEF's contributions to the Middle East ceasefire, it is still doubtful that members would approve any major innovations. There are, however, several incremental changes that might foster the slow development of greater institutional independence and contribute to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

--The existing process of selecting participant states has greatly hindered UNEF. It has been a source of delay and added political conflict, and has produced a cast of participating states which are not all fully qualified to field effective peacekeeping contingents. Although there is a "fire brigade" of states which maintain troops earmarked for UN operations, they are Europeans and/or politically associated with the West. Really effective UN peacekeeping operations would seem to require the use of European units as well, perhaps, as US and Soviet forces. The political obstacles to their presence are not likely to be easily overcome. In any case, the requirement that all regions should be represented in such UN projects; the predominance of nonaligned states in the UN; and Communist insistence on participation equivalent to that of the West all argue against international forces drawn largely from presently earmarked troops.

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Additional UN reserve units from non-aligned states are necessary; the prestige and benefits associated with membership in UN forces makes it likely several countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia would be willing to provide them. Such a ready pool of geographically and politically balanced states prepared to field peacekeeping units would both accelerate and simplify the creation of UN forces and assure better-prepared units.

--A small, permanent staff for peacekeeping administration could also be a valuable and relatively simple improvement. There are now three separate UN peacekeeping operations: in the Middle East, in Cyprus, and on the Kashmir-Pakistan border. The desirability of cooperation among these undertakings has been demonstrated by Secretary-General Waldheim's "borrowing" experienced troops from the Cyprus operation to provide an immediate and highly capable UNEF presence for the Middle East ceasefire. A small UN office could be established to promote such cooperation and an exchange of assets among the peacekeeping operations. The office could also provide an organizational memory and professional continuity between operations; it would reinforce the development of precedent and custom which could eventually give operations the stability of established structures and expectations.

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>PERSONNEL IN M.E.</u>	<u>SITUATION</u>
Sweden	560	Patrolling Ismailia area.
Ireland	270	Patrolling between Israeli front and Egyptian second army on east bank.
Austria	400	Patrolling Bitter Lake area. 200 additional troops staging for a US airlift.
Finland	610	Patrolling Suez City and Israeli-controlled area to west, including disputed Suez road checkpoints.
Canada	500	Communications corps. 600 additional troops expected for logistics units.
Poland	270	Engineering unit. Approximately 500 additional troops to be provided for joint logistics
Peru	500	Deployed on east bank, Suez area.
Panama	400	Patrolling southern Sinai front.
Indonesia	600	Deployed in area of Ismailia.
Nepal		Will provide 400-500 Gurkhas.
Ghana		Will provide 600-man infantry unit.

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Kenya

Arrival of 500-man contingent delayed by temporary freeze on insertion of new UNEF units.

Senegal

Expected to provide 500-man unit. Mid-January arrival may be delayed by lack of airlift facilities.

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